

## Saint of the Week: William Passavant (1821-1894)

*observed 3 January*



William Alfred Passavant was born at the beginning of the 19th century in a Pennsylvania town founded by the diplomat father of his future wife. After college and seminary, he became a Lutheran pastor and journalist. He was active in the Lutheran ministry throughout his life. His principal energies were devoted to ministries caring for those in need. Most notably he became acquainted with Pastor Theodore Fliedner in Germany. Fliedner is credited with the modern founding of the diaconate in the Lutheran Church, having founded a training school for deaconesses. Passavant asked his German counterpart to bring some of these new deaconesses to the United States to carry on hospital ministry in Pittsburgh at the hospital which now bears Passavant's name. Passavant was instrumental in founding a number of hospitals and orphanages in the mid-Atlantic states and the middle west. These together became the core of the important organization Lutheran Services in America. Passavant's powerful sense of Christ's call to all Christians to faithfully care for the 'least of these' has born fruit for generations.

From the website of Glade Run Lutheran Services in Pennsylvania: "Our heritage of caring was established by William Passavant as The Orphan's Home and Farm School. Through our forefathers' association with the Lutheran Church, they nurtured community service, kindness and hope - driven by a sense of mission. That mission has transcended time as we continue this tradition today." The picture shows some of the many orphans in the early 20th century.

*Lessons* Isaiah 29:17-24; Psalm 147:1-7; Revelation 3:13-22; Luke 13:10-22

*Collect* Compassionate God, we thank you for William Passavant, who brought the German deaconess movement to America so that dedicated women might assist him in founding orphanages and hospitals for those in need and provide for the theological education of future ministers. Inspire us by his example, that we may be tireless to address the wants of all who are sick and friendless; through Jesus the divine Physician, who has prepared for us an eternal home, and who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen